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ABSTRACT

This booklet, the result of meetings of a college faculty seminar held during academic year 1989-1990 provides observations and advice concerning the basics on how to get published. The advice comes from faculty experience and the thoughts offered from invited guests familiar with writing, editing, and publishing in the academy. The booklet includes the following sections: What To Write About: The Literature Marketplace; The Politics of Publishing; Networking and Aggressive Overtures; and The Manuscript. These sections contain advice and information on how to put a manuscript into professional form, discuss meeting deadlines, and generally offer guidelines concerning the process of moving from research to draft to finished and published copy. It is noted that publication is not a solo effort, but derived from a shared venture with colleagues, staff, editors, and students. Among the numerous recommendations offered are: know what's valued at your college; talk to others about the work; identify the authorities best qualified to give advice; join professional societies and organizations; capitalize on attendance at major conferences; and know the journal for which you wish to write, submit all required material, and scrupulously follow stated documentation form. A selected bibliography lists 26 journals, directories, subject-related guides, or writing guides. (GLR)

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on publishing in the academy

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A Note to Colleagues

The Faculty Development Program was created through contractual negotiations between the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY and The City University of New York. Since its inception in 1982, the program has offered professional enhancement to hundreds of faculty members throughout the university, to the benefit of their colleges, their colleagues and their students. The initiative of the 1989-1990 seminar on Publishing in the Academy is further evidence of the value of the program and the professionalism of its participants. We are pleased to share the results of their efforts with the entire academic community.

Irwin H. Polishook
President
Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Nota Bene

What follows was put together by the CUNY Seminar on Publishing in the Academy which met from September 1989 to May 1990. Although these remarks reflect the discussions and work of that seminar, it is hoped that faculty anywhere might find the comments helpful. In the words of the seminar participants, the booklet tries not to "reinvent the wheel" and to concentrate instead on the basics that may be overlooked or go unsaid in typical how-to-get-published guides. The common sense and information presented come from the participants' own experience during the seminar year and from talks given by invited guests familiar with writing, editing, and publishing in the academy. Although some of the experiences discussed by seminar participants were unusual or particular, the advice offered here was felt to be applicable to colleagues everywhere.

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1. Rationale

Yes, perhaps all of us should know all about writing for publication, but the fact is, we don't. Graduate schools usually pass over the topic, and for many different reasons, some of us may be reluctant to ask colleagues for assistance in writing or choosing where to send articles or book proposals. Many guides on the subject tend to be general to the point of being obvious or full of lists without selection. There are some good annotated sources out there, but many of us didn't know of their existence. It's extremely useful to have a select list of practical and up-to-date directories that can help target prospective publishers. The information they contain can also prompt thoughts about subjects for writing. Though the scope widened to cover all the topics of the seminar, this booklet began with the idea of recommending such directories.

It's important, for example, to know how many books a particular university or trade publisher puts out each year and whether the number has been going up or declining. As for periodicals -- we tend to be familiar only with the top journals in our field, the ones we were expected to read in graduate school, those with international reputation, often affiliated with national associations. We know little about some excellent but less high powered presses and scholarly journals, especially interdisciplinary and general periodicals, where we might have a better chance of being accepted.

Particularly for those seeking tenure, though also for anyone frustrated at trying to get into print, the process of getting published is more complex than just going through directories of presses and periodicals. There are also psychological and political considerations involved in writing for and placing manuscripts for publication. Because of the pressure to publish, we may mistake the nature of academic writing. We may think that scholarship applies only to the dissertation field, which is not where most of us teach. Personnel and Budget (P & B) committees say they prefer publication in refereed journals rather than in in-house monographs and university or college-based periodicals, but such local placements may be fertile ground for trying out new ideas.

This booklet puts the talk of the Faculty Development Seminar into practice. It is a collaborative effort, the product of small groups working

together (not always with sweetness and light) and submitting material for continued review. For many in the seminar, such an experience was new. Writing tends to be a solitary act, but editing need not be. Yet we have little opportunity to discuss work-in-progress with anyone in our department, or may not want to. In this regard, the seminar showed the benefits of what might be replicated on individual campuses: a small, interdisciplinary group of faculty getting together at regular intervals to discuss each other's writing. "Regular" insures a deadline, which is important; "small" makes the group workable; "interdisciplinary" invites comments from those with different perspectives who may ask healthy questions about the difference between technical vocabulary and jargon. Advice from friends may be too cautious; trying to get readers in your department can be difficult; and sometimes the cutting comments editors make on rejected manuscripts can hurt. A major recommendation of this booklet therefore is to enter into some kind of arrangement with a few people at your college or university for purposes of manuscript discussion and review. And give as good as you expect to get.

2. *What to Write About*

Because many teachers wind up teaching out of the dissertation field, they may be confused about what counts when it comes to tenure and promotion. Regardless, write about subjects you like -- you don't have to do the "diss" anymore (if that's what the experience was). There is intellectual advantage in freely choosing a field for research, and great delight when you know your work will be read by more than your mother or a diligent member of the P & B committee. Of course, your choice may be to pursue the dissertation topic.

Despite publishers' warnings that 90% of all doctoral dissertations are unpublishable, and the fact that university presses are turning increasingly to general and popular subjects, you should try to get the thesis or a part of it published. A letter of inquiry to a book publisher or a chat with publishers' reps at national conferences is in order if you're thinking of reworking the dissertation into a book. State what you want to do, give a brief analysis of the market, show that you are aware of similar material in your discipline, and say why you think that your book will make a contribution to the field. Publishers want to see proposals not only to consider their timeliness and significance, but also to see how you write. The uphill battle in getting a dissertation into print is not just because publishers have seen too much "dissertationese"; they have also read too many book proposals that seem to offer only precious elaborations. What they want is scholarship that can appeal to a wider audience, research that will sell. They point out that dissertations can be made over for a general readership, but rarely can they be published without extensive rewriting. Your sources or your treatment, for example, may need overhaul (look at the dates on your bibliography: how many references are five or more years old?) Trends move quickly in some fields, and journal editors advise studying recent issues of journals, not just the latest one on the open shelves. The point to be stressed here is that you may indeed be able to redo your thesis without succumbing to crass popularization.

An alternative to rewriting the thesis would be to create an article based on it. This would give you a chance to expand and update your thesis

subject and get yourself known as a specialist in your area. You might also ask to be considered as a book reviewer for a journal in your field. Or if the journal has a letters/debate/forum section, you might write extended commentary. Theme issues are particularly worth going after because your chances of getting published in a themed issue are greater than for the general run. Theme issues are usually advertised sufficiently in advance for you to write a one-page letter of inquiry that contains a brief summary of your work, asking if it's suitable.

Writing as well for a popular audience need not conflict with writing for colleagues in your discipline. There can be mutual benefits. Writing for a popular audience helps dispel dissertationese and encourages a relaxed and fluid style of discourse. Besides, one good way of testing a scholarly work for significance is to make research widely accessible at the same time you are writing for a scholarly publication. Try to write about your specialty for a newspaper, for public t.v. or radio. Popular writing can also be intellectually profitable: when you write for the media, you're forced into presenting a strong rationale, evoking interest, and adopting a conversational style. The important point is not to get stuck in the dissertation field and think this is all there is.

Another good place to look for topics is in your own classroom because for many of us, teaching is our discipline, not the dissertation field. Why not let students know about your research? How would you defend it as important? What could you say about the process of research that would interest freshmen, colleagues in other departments, administrators? The classroom yields other ideas as well: Can your syllabus be expanded into a textbook? Can new courses be designed? Look around and examine the possibilities in your department and on your campus. The rationale for the development of a new course might become an article. Newspapers and magazines are filled with stories about education: write letters to the editor, articles of your own. There are many journals specifically devoted to teaching and to debating issues in higher education for which you can do reporting, book reviewing, and feature writing. Just ask -- in writing, of course. Other possibilities for publishable material might be drawn from symposia, seminars, and conferences. Write about something fresh or something familiar with a new point of view. Now is the time, not ten years from now, to become a specialist in another area.

3. *Literary Marketplace*

There are several annual annotated directories that target prospective publishers. For example, *The Literary Market Place* and *The Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media* provide information about departments, subsidiary companies, and names of department heads. *The Gale Directory* and *The AV Marketplace* are also useful as nonprint manuals. Most valuable are directories that indicate areas of concentration and specialization. Such source books are usually organized in ways that allow you to get information according to the name of the publisher (alphabetically listed), subject matter, professional associations, or geographical area. Don't be misled by a publisher's university name. You don't have to be a graduate of that university in order to submit a manuscript. Some university presses are independent of their institutions; others have close ties, and a good directory will make this distinction. But, again, make sure you look only at the latest issue.

Sometimes annotated directories of book publishers and, separately, of periodical literature go beyond providing basic facts and describing concentrations. There are quirky directories such as Markle and Rinn's (1977) that give you the low-down: biases, response time, inane submission procedures, general reputation. These offbeat collections, some subject-specific, may actually be more helpful than the traditional directories. You may learn that a particular periodical has a shaky history, comes out erratically, attracts those with a certain point of view (a sense you're likely to get from any journal that lists sponsors or affiliations). On the other hand, you may also learn that certain highly regarded journals operate a little differently from the way they promote themselves, and that some behave as if they were a private club. The value of such annotated directories is in letting you know about books, periodicals and magazines you never knew existed -- there seems to be a publication for just about everything under the sun!

Some how-to books on publishing worth consulting are Day (1989) and Van Til (1986), both by experienced authors and editors. General guides such as *Magazines for Libraries* (annual) and subject-specific guides such

as Cabell's, for education or for business, are also recommended (see Chapter 8). The *Encyclopedia of Associations*' three-volume directory of periodicals in business, science, and the humanities and education, identifies professional organizations and their publications. Because you need to keep current, you should also regularly consult publications such as *Choice* and *Publishers Weekly* (*PW*), and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (*CHE*) all of which you can most likely find in your library. *PW* will give you a good sense of what sells and *CHE*, the trade newspaper for academics, in addition to listing grant and fellowship deadlines, is a valuable source of news and reviews. Its "Gazette" feature carries notes from editors and publishers soliciting manuscripts, and the "New Scholarly Books" column indicates current trends by way of short summaries of recent and forthcoming publications. *CHE* also provides information on new computer software.

An increasing amount of good source material can be searched electronically, and while the purpose of going online is to fish for books and articles, the casting may also turn up journals and publishers you might not know about. You can find out about telecommunications and computer technology on your campus through various newsletters and bulletins. Online services and CD-ROMs have made the research process easier. Computerized database searches can turn up some wonderful citations, often with brief text that gives you the gist of the material. Your reference librarian can tell you what your college owns, can refer you to other libraries, and can advise you about what search services are available through your university computer center. It's worth taking the time to find out how electronic searches and conferencing work.

No matter how carefully annotated print or online listings might be, however, there is no substitute for going to the journals themselves and personally scrutinizing the articles. Familiarize yourself with their emphases, biases, literary style(s) and editorial board -- some names might even be familiar. But do remember that names and positions keep changing, so make sure you have the latest information. Nothing is more embarrassing than having an inquiry or submission answered that clearly indicates you did not take the time to acquaint yourself with the publication, or with a recent issue, which might have heralded a change of policy or procedure. (See Chapter 8 for more suggested sources.)

4. The Politics of Publishing

Publishing for reappointment, tenure and promotion (we leave the pleasure principle aside for the moment) is a political as well as an intellectual process. What follows is a distillation of discussions with visiting experts.

Know what's valued at your college

Find out about the publications criteria by which you'll be judged. Different colleges may weigh publication differently, especially now that the debate over teaching as opposed to research heats up once again. There need be no conflict between research and teaching. In fact, the teaching of particular disciplines has itself become a productive field for research.

If book reviews, newsletter pieces and articles in local journals count, then by all means do as many as possible because they are often excellent introductions to wider opportunities. Are textbooks weighed equally with research monographs? What about popular and general publication as opposed to scholarly and disciplinary? If the department and college committees who vote on your record regard only refereed journals as significant or require that publication be in periodicals with national reputation, then don't lose time by working only at more limited levels. To take another example, some P & B committees may hold that collaboration or editing does not provide the best showcase of a candidate's talent to do original research, unless the collaborative or editorial work includes a substantial essay by the candidate, one that could stand alone as a separate publication. The important point is, find out what's valued on your particular campus. You need not agree with those sentiments, but you should know about them.

Politics aside (is this ever possible?), publication in refereed journals is highly regarded because (ideally) it reflects judgment by peers. Papers are preferred over conference talks because they show the formal written evidence of research and make permanent contributions to the scholarly community by being open to inspection and review.

Identify the authorities who can advise you

In addition to the department and college-wide P & B, what does the dean or provost think? Have there been changes in criteria over the last few years? It is important for you to get such information from the proper authorities. At CUNY, for example, the contract calls for an "evaluation conference" with the department chair, at which time you should know how teaching, publishing, and service are variously rated. Departments should convey a sense of what they expect of their faculty, but faculty should also take the initiative early and ask questions. It is your department chair's responsibility to inform you accurately and within the contract deadlines about what counts. But it is up to you to ensure that you expend your energies wisely on writing what will bring advancement as well as be a source of pride. In any case, depending on your college, ask to see an evaluation form, speak to your chair and to colleagues you respect; get to know what's valued -- and valuable. Such information is critical, especially for new faculty members, who often don't know that they are entitled to such information.

Differentiate between due process and academic judgment

Litigation does not turn on debate over academic merit, but on alleged violations of the rules. Only matters of due process are grievable. Academic judgment is not subject to union review. You may feel that what you've done is extremely valuable, that it makes a substantial contribution to the field, that it should be better appreciated in the form of reappointment, tenure or promotion, but grievance lawyers will not get involved in what they rightfully perceive are intellectual judgments. This distinction is essential but often overlooked.

5. Networking and Aggressive Overtures

Although intellectual substance, value, and merit should be their own reward, the competitive world forces us to take steps beyond good research and writing to improve our chances of getting published. Appropriate assertiveness, therefore, by introducing yourself to colleagues, getting involved in professional organizations, and writing to journal editors about special theme issues is important. In any case, you might want to find out the rejection rate for the journal you have in mind. Also, the more visible you are, the more you may be invited to submit material to a journal or give a talk at a national conference. Some people do overdo this part, hoping to substitute service for solid writing and research. If your goal is to improve your chances of getting published, however, you know the difference between worthwhile invitations to speak at other campuses and becoming an easy mark for filling out other people's programs. Remember, writing takes time, and if you do not make choices, you will not deliver.

Experts who visited the seminar repeatedly underscored the potential benefits of joining professional societies and organizations and capitalizing on attendance at major conferences. Local and state meetings may be more open to beginning writers and better places to meet colleagues than national conventions. Talk to editors and publishers' representatives at book fairs. Ask what sells, what kind of proposal letter to write, whether to send along sample writing. Make sure your identification tag is visible, and of course, remember, there is a difference between being enterprising and being pushy.

There are also contacts to make through computer networks, where you can learn about publications, trends, and organizations. Here's another way to find knowledgeable and helpful readers, a mini support group, who might give your manuscript (or, more reasonably, a part of it) a hard critical reading. But even this stage does not signal the end of "aggressive overtures."

Once a manuscript has been sent off, follow up with a letter or phone call if you haven't heard anything after the stated response time.

Average waiting time for an answer to a query is usually two weeks; for an announcement of the arrival of a manuscript, three weeks; for a decision on acceptance or rejection, three months (though one patient soul waited eight years, the record); and for publication, one to two years. The secret of assertiveness is to demonstrate interest and professional confidence, without sounding anxious or arrogant. Even if your manuscript has been kept for an inordinate length of time, don't be insulted. In the seminar we discovered that even the most well intentioned editors or conference organizers inadvertently lose material or misplace it. Sometimes they get stuck by depending on unreliable readers, or in the throes of unusual personal or professional business, miss deadlines. Inquire. Who knows, some editor wavering in a decision about your piece may be favorably impressed by your polite persistence.

And what if you're rejected? Is it The End? One way to soften the blow is to take advantage of any suggestions to revise and resubmit. Sometimes readers send on comments that, despite stating reasons for rejection, do contain helpful hints for revising. You may be urged to redo your article for the same journal or send it to another that is more appropriate. If you feel strongly that the rejection was not based on substantive reasons, you might resubmit it when the editorial board changes. Particularly if a journal has a "blind referee" policy (readers and contributors don't know each other's names and in some cases even the editors don't know), your name will not be known to a new board. Old biases go out with old readers, or perhaps the board the year you submitted received an unusual number of articles on your subject or with your point of view: it happens. Have a "back up" journal or several possibilities in mind, but under no circumstances send copies to all of them at the same time! Euphemistic rationalizations aside, "rejection" sometimes is merely nonacceptance for the moment.

And if you're accepted right away? Don't forget to promote yourself after publication. See that the public relations person on your campus knows about your publication, and that an offprint is sent to colleagues and to the academic dean. Market Thyself. No one else will.

6. The Manuscript

The how-to guides say it, but we'll underscore the point: know your journal or publication, honor deadlines, submit all required material, including abstracts and multiple copies, and scrupulously follow stated documentation form. Nothing kills chances so fast as a submission that fails to conform to a publication's requirements.

Publication information usually appears in the journal itself, on an editorial page, but some journals have additional rules which you should send for. You court rejection immediately if you show you are unfamiliar with a journal's style sheet and procedures, not to mention preferred topics or points of view. One well-known literary journal, for example, on a comparative lit-feminist roll for several years, just recently pulled back from this emphasis -- an important fact to know, especially considering the backlogs and waiting times of most journals. Another journal changed its documentation form, but obviously not all of its potential authors were aware of it. Study a journal and follow its form faithfully, down to the way titles appear and graphs and data are presented.

It may sound simplistic to say this (it's what we tell our students), but good writing shows immediately in the letter of inquiry, the book prospectus, the introductory paragraph, or the abstract, so take extra time and ensure that first impressions -- and the first page, especially, speak well for you. Don't repeat the title, don't advertise what's coming, don't apologize or be overconfident. Tone is paramount: be academic, but don't sound that way.

The title shows first; spend time on it. It may be clever or cute but if it is not first clear and informative, forget it. Maybe it's time to avoid the trendy colon-and-subtitle as well. The abstract (if one is required) is next in importance. But even if the journal doesn't require one, an abstract is not a bad way of checking your thesis and rationale. A good abstract has active voice, tight diction, and the right proportional relation to the text. Keep in mind that publishers and editors ask readers on their editorial board to comment on the importance of your

subject, the significance of your thesis, its relation to current trends in the field, its intellectual quality and scholarly skill, and of course your writing. Editors visiting the seminar told us that they often had to read no further than a first paragraph to recognize a rejection.

Then there's the matter of tone, significant enough to note here because numerous guest editors told us how annoyed readers get when key terms are undefined or when theses are announced as "breakthrough." One helpful suggestion, we found, was to read work aloud, to hear whether it had a commanding style without sounding blustering, or a conversational manner, without being loose (some people like to tape record). Over and over in the seminar, when asked to clarify a certain written remark, our colleagues made better sense when they told us what they were trying to do.

In the manuscript itself, double check details that show you as a careful writer -- pagination, typos, integration of text and charts in desired form. Editors who visited the seminar indicated how put-off referees are by sloppiness in these specifics, especially in the age of word processors (and no dot matrix copies, please). Make sure you submit the manuscript exactly as your intended journal or publication wants, which may not necessarily be the way it would appear in print.

Your competence will show in several important ways: in your references, one of the first places editors look to see if you are up to date and aware of trends; in your sensitivity to your intended audience; in your effective use of primary and secondary sources (like Goldilocks and the bears, don't have too many or too few); in your consideration of when to quote a source and when to paraphrase for the purpose of summary and evaluation; and finally in the overall impression you give of a logical rather than anecdotal presentation.

7. Summary

It used to be, publish or perish; now it can be publish and perish, so what's the point of writing for publication, you might ask. Isn't the emphasis these days more on teaching than on research? Are long hours in the library and at the word processor worth the effort if the scholarship does not seem to relate to the subject we teach or address pressing issues of basic skills or cultural diversity and pluralism? "Hic sunt dracones," the map makers of old used to say, drawing dragons where regions were unknown and therefore perilous. There is risk in writing for publication: rejection, demoralization, anxiety. Can our modest offerings really matter to The World?

Such concerns underlay our discussions in the seminar, but as we went on, it became increasingly apparent that faculty development is a matter of soul as well as of ego; that research can be a means of growing intellectually, not simply of making one's way to tenure and promotion; and that the pleasures of moving from draft to finished and published copy are unique and exhilarating.

Having something significant to say, something we have helped bring to light because of our own efforts to practice what we preach, ensures that an inquiring mind remains the center of our professional life. In writing for publication we go outside familiar confines, away from those we live or work with who know us, to show what we think and feel to peers in the wider world of anonymous journals and dispassionate book reviews.

There is life beyond tenure and promotion. When the politics of a given moment yields to new trends, when the cast of minor players in academe shifts yet again, what remains by way of our publications is a record of what we have contributed to our discipline, and proof that we have kept alive the habit of critical thinking, for ourselves and for our students. Therein lie true pleasure and power.

Publication is not a solo effort, but derived from a shared venture with colleagues, staff, editors, students. Talk to others about your work. Even if you're not accepted at first, don't become discouraged. You've

learned to put a manuscript into professional form, to meet deadlines, to discover something about your writing. You've also no doubt found out a good deal you didn't know about periodicals and book publishers -- not to mention your own field of study -- and increased your professional contacts: these are all benefits that will move you along professionally. Eventually you will publish.

8. Selected Bibliography

Weekly, Monthly and Quarterly Publications

Choice.
The Chronicle of Higher Education.
Directory of Online Databases. New York: Cuadra Associates.
Library Journal.
Publishers Weekly.
Scholarly Publishing. Toronto: Toronto UP.

Annual Directories

AV Marketplace. New York: Bowker.
Encyclopedia of Associations, 3 vols. Detroit: Gale.
Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media. Detroit: Gale.
Literary Market Place: The Directory of American Book Publishing. New York: Bowker.
The Writer's Market. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest.

Subject-related Guides

Authors' Guide to Journals in Psychology, Psychiatry, and Social Work. ed. Allan Markle and Roger C. Rinn. New York: Haworth.
Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Business and Economics. Beaumont, TX: Cabell.
Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Education. Beaumont, TX: Cabell.

Writing Guides

Becker, Howard Saul. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1986.

Chicago Guide to Preparing Electronic Manuscripts. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1987.

Day, Robert A. *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1988.

Henson, Kenneth T. "Writing for Education Journals." *Phi Delta Kappan* 71 (June 1990): 800-803.

Katz, Bill, and Linda Sternberg Katz. *Magazines for Libraries*. New York: Bowker, 1989.

Krull, Kathleen. *Twelve Keys to Writing Books That Sell*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest, 1989.

Penaskovic, Richard. "Facing Up to the Publication Gun." *Scholarly Publishing* 16 (January 1985): 136-146.

Walford, A.J. *Reviews and Reviewing: A Guide*. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1986.

Van Til, William. *Writing for Professional Publication*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1986.

There are numerous other guides, too many to mention, but note that most are classified under authorship, periodicals, and directories.

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Bronx, NY 10468

Medgar Evers College
1150 Carroll Street
Brooklyn, NY 11225

New York City Technical College
300 Jay Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Queens College
65-30 Kissena Boulevard
Flushing, NY 11367

Queensborough Community College
222-05 56th Avenue
Bayside, NY 11364

The College of Staten Island
715 Ocean Terrace
Staten Island, NY 10301

York College
94-20 Guy R. Brewer Boulevard
Jamaica, NY 11451

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY

the union representing the CUNY instructional staff
25 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036

American Association of University Professors • American Federation of Teachers •
New York City Central Labor Council • New York State AFL-CIO •
New York State United Teachers